

# Lama Gangchen Help in Action Nepal Earthquake Emergency Fund

Newsletter | August | 2015



*The 7.8 magnitude earthquake in April, with the epicentre in the Gorkha District, just 80 km northwest of Kathmandu, absolutely devastated Nepal killing approximately 9,000 people, injuring 23,000 and leaving an estimated 500,000 families homeless. A further 2 earthquakes of magnitudes 7.3 and 6.3 occurred in May hitting the border of Dolakha and Sidhupalchowk districts and Ramechhap. Since then, in May alone, there were 290 aftershocks measuring above magnitude 4 and still today the earth continues to tremble.*



We would like to thank everyone who has donated to our Nepal Emergency Fund as well as all the people who have helped by organising fundraising events. At the time of printing the total collected is **€121,100.71**. We are so grateful to each and every one of you for enabling us to offer concrete help to people living in some of the remotest and worst hit villages in Nepal. There really are no words to convey the joy, relief and hope for the future that these villagers have expressed upon receiving your help.

Since the earthquake, our office has been immersed in work relating to this terrible disaster that killed thousands and left many more injured, without homes, food or a livelihood. Along with the shock and worry of the general situation in Nepal, we were also faced with the immense task of locating – under very difficult circumstances – the children and families we support through our sponsorship programme. For us, who have seen over the years

thousands of children grow-up and have personal connections with them, it was a very emotional time so it was with a great sense of relief that we finally arrived in Kathmandu in June.

Outside the airport we were met by the hectic hustle and bustle normally associated with Kathmandu. As we headed towards the Tinchule-Boudhanath area, where we have worked for the past 20 years, the streets were full of traffic, children in school uniforms walking home from school, people shopping and just going about their normal daily business. On the surface it all looked surprisingly normal, until we noticed gaps where buildings once stood, saw rubble from damaged building piled in the street, realised that the bamboo poles leaning against houses and walls were actually holding them up... Every open space was still full of makeshift tents and shelters, where people are living, either because they are afraid to return to their homes or because their homes

are too damaged to live in. Buildings that seem intact from the outside, are actually dangerously damaged inside.

Both the Himalayan Healing Centre and Gangchen Drupkhang suffered structural damage during the earthquakes. The handicraft and small vocational training programmes held at Gangchen Drupkhang were quickly located to a nearby site and activities were already underway just 10 days after the earthquake. Our local office unfortunately suffered irreparable damage – making it too dangerous to enter even to retrieve our files or computer – and will have to be demolished.

Other areas in and around the city were not so lucky - just short distances away from where we are located entire villages have collapsed, ancient temples and historical buildings have disappeared and lives lost. Everyone we met told of their panic, fear and losses. The streets in these places – once filled with tourists – are now

empty, and this means that many people have lost their livelihoods. Nepal however still has so much to offer those who want to visit.

The very real disaster though is in the remote villages far away from the city. The people in these villages are simple farmers who already survived with very little and who lost everything when their homes collapsed during the earthquake. For these people, who have no income, the necessity at the moment is to construct shelters in order to protect themselves from the heavy monsoon rains and cold: the aid they requested and desperately needed was material to make roofs.. For all our team it was inspiring and humbling to see the people in these communities, where not one home is left standing, moving forward and getting on with the daily tasks of producing food and sifting through debris to extract any reusable materials - a clear message for us that life is not always based on material possessions.

**9495 people from 1910 families are now under cover thanks to your help!**



During our aid “mission” to Nepal (in June/July) we were able to buy and distribute materials such as tents, tarpaulins and iron sheeting to 1910 families, which means 9495 people are now under cover! These materials have reached some of the remotest villages that – even after 2 months – had still not received any aid. *We have delivered help to villages in Nuwakot, Sidhupalchowk, Ramechhap and Makwanpur districts.*

An estimated 8,000 schools across the 49 districts in Nepal have been seriously damaged or completely destroyed. It was completely shocking to see the collapsed roofs of village schools crushing the desks underneath, and we can only give thanks that the earthquake happened on Saturday – a holiday – when no children were in the buildings.

We were able to supply 7 village schools with roofing materials, 3 schools with water tanks and distributed school stationary to approximately 305 children. We have

also sponsored the Shree Jana Bhuwana Primary School in Shikharpur Village for this academic year to ensure that the 90 children that presently attend it will be be sure to receive an education. Gangchen Samling School, which suffered only superficial damage, received tents and material to build temporary classrooms as many of the younger children are afraid to be in large buildings during the frequent aftershocks.

In Kathmandu 2 small monasteries have received tents to house, immediately after the earthquake for safety and now whilst they do repair work, the 70 young monks living there. We were also able to donate iron sheets for making roofs to 7 small monasteries in Balche and Kahule villages in Nuwakot District.

During this mission we tried to personally meet all the children sponsored through the long distance adoptions programme. Although many of the children told us that the homes of their grandparents in villages spread



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throughout Nepal have been lost – fortunately only 9 of our families living in Kathmandu have had problems relating directly to the earthquake. We have offered aid and practical help to these families. To the orphanage, run by the Nepal Women & Children Service Society, which was badly damaged by the earthquake, we donated a large stock of dried foods: rice, lentils, soya, salt, sugar, tea, cooking oil, biscuits etc which should last them 3 to 4 months. The orphanage cares for 40 children – many of whom attend Gangchen Samling School and are sponsored by the Association.

We are fortunate to have the help of Lama Gangchen's family and friends, who have always supported the work of Help in Action, in Nepal; but also to have representatives from Serpom and Shar Ganden monasteries in South India where many of the monks originate from Nepal. Before our arrival in Nepal these monks had already visited and brought back photos and information

from villages requesting help. Because of the distances involved and the problems of access they were invaluable in helping us to get help directly to the places that needed it most. The village people were also so happy to have the emotional and spiritual support of the monks and everywhere we visited they have been requested to make prayer ceremonies.

Although we have already helped many people and are continuing to deliver help – the conditions in the villages are dire and more help will be needed in the coming months... The media may not speak about the situation in Nepal anymore, but the people here really do need your support. Please don't forget Nepal! We are still raising funds which hopefully will allow us to help in the repairing and rebuilding of schools, orphanages, monasteries and other structures. Please help us by sharing this newsletter! The details for donations are underneath.





**Thank you for your contribution!**

**Please don't forget Nepal  
A lot more help will be needed if the people of Nepal  
are to overcome the devastating effects of the earthquakes.**

You can make a donation to our  
Nepal Earthquake Emergency Fund by bank:  
Account 7770/67  
Banca Popolare di Sondrio, Agency 13, Milan, Italy  
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